

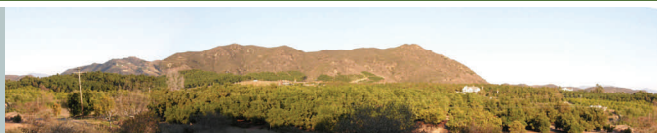
County of San Diego - Parks and Open Space Program

Contributing to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan Environment Initiative

"Promote natural resource management strategies that ensure environmental preservation, quality of life, and economic development"

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County of San Diego Showcases its



The County is nationally recognized as a regional leader in developing innovative and cost-effective programs that protect and enhance San Diego County's diverse environment while balancing our economic and biological needs. The County takes this commitment seriously and it is reflected in the many awards the County has received for these exceptional programs, including the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP).

To date, the County and our partners have preserved over 40,000 acres of land. A large portion of this preserved land is part of our award-winning MSCP. These lands help to protect many of San Diego County's more than 2,000 sensitive plants and 700 vertebrate species. These preserved lands are also critical for the hundreds of rare or endangered species that are found in this biological "hot spot."

The County has also designed and implemented an array of other precedent-setting programs that protect and improve the quality of our land, air, and water resources. On Tuesday, April 24, 2007, County staff had the opportunity to present the Board of Supervisors and the public with an update on these programs and how the County is meeting our commitment to the environment.

A wide range of County programs were showcased, including the emission control activities such as the Lower Emission School Bus Retrofit Program and the Lawnmower Exchange Program. These activities have significantly improved the region's air quality, helping to better meet ozone standards and making San Diego County the region with the most improved air quality in the nation in 2005.

The County's central involvement in Project Clean Water was recognized for measurably increasing the water quality of our oceans and rivers through monitoring and clean-up. The County has also been a leader in environmental education through Project Clean Water and others programs such as the Discovery Kit and the Seeds of Wonder Programs that educate youth about the outdoors. Our Green Building program is also creating opportunities to bring "green" indoors, facilitating more environmentally-friendly development.

Together, these programs and many others represent the County's ongoing commitment to improve the quality of life and the environment in San Diego County. Working with our partners to put our cutting-edge programs to work, the County is taking significant steps toward creating a sustainable future.



In the County's presentation, the grasslands seen above served as an example of the one of the ecosystems preserved by MSCP.

To learn more about many of these programs, visit the County's home page at <http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov>



Agricultural Workshops in North County

help to guide MSCP Plans

Below: Adam Wagschal, MSCP Planner II, explains Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA) concepts to local landowners.



Above: Farm and ranches are an integral part of North County.



Above: Tom Oberbauer, MSCP Chief, helps find property locations on a draft preserve map.

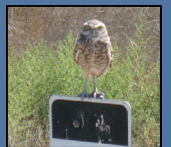
Agriculture is a vital part of the economy and lifestyle of North County. Two workshops which focused on agriculture and conservation were held in March 2007 that allowed the MSCP team and the Department of Agriculture Weights and Measures to listen to farmers and ranchers from the North County. The participants were able to voice their concerns about agriculture and conservation planning.

Agriculture is an important part of the landscape for different types of wildlife by providing food, shelter, and open areas for deer, coyotes, hawks, toads, and songbirds, among others. In creating a conservation plan for the North County area, the MSCP team and other wildlife organizations recognized that agriculture can play a role in the protection of wildlife while continuing with business as usual.

The workshops started with a brief overview of North County MSCP planning to date. Then the group broke into smaller sections to discuss different aspects of how this plan could affect farms and ranches. County staff was available to discuss the preliminary concepts for the North County MSCP with respect to existing agricultural operations, expansion of agriculture, and development of agricultural lands. Over 80 public participants came to these workshops. Comments from farmers about wildlife and farming ranged from issues regarding County regulations to a desire to help protect wildlife on their farms. There were also several questions raised about the draft Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA) boundaries. Some farmers and ranchers told the MSCP team of wildlife found in unexpected places that they suggested should be included in PAMA. Others related information about land that was newly developed so that it may no longer be suitable for conservation. The comments provided in these workshops will be used to update some PAMA boundaries to create a better preserve system.

Upcoming Event: MSCP Annual Report Presentation

On June 26th, 2007, public agencies in San Diego will present their accomplishments in habitat preservation during the last year. Among the presenters is the County of San Diego's MSCP division. The MSCP Annual Report for 2006 will be available to attendees and will present facts such as recent acquisitions and how MSCP preserves and manages open space. Other participants include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Cities of San Diego, Poway and Chula Vista. The workshop will be held at the County of San Diego Operations Center at the County Library Conference Room (Building #15) at 5555 Overland Avenue from 9:00am-10:30am.



The burrowing owl is a species that is covered by the MSCP.

For more information about MSCP please visit www.mscp-sandiego.org. To learn more about the information that will be provided or for directions, please contact Dahvia Lynch, County of San Diego, at (858) 694-3075.



Before MSCP

Recently Acquired Areas in Ramona And Santa Ysabel Seen Through Eyes of the Past

One of the joys of conducting historic research is to look through the eyes of people from the past. Before cameras, people painted pictures with words. Below are two articles that focus on Mesa Grande and Santa Ysabel. The articles (in typical Victorian language) are interesting and exciting and show us what the open spaces looked like over 100 years ago.

THE WEEKLY WORLD (SAN DIEGO)

OCTOBER 5, 1872

COST: \$3.00 A YEAR

The Weekly World newspaper editor took the stage from San Diego to Julian and reported on what he saw and experienced. He begins a lengthy article by stating *"Utterly ignorant is the man who mounts Tweed's coach to traverse the span of seventy miles or so that intervenes between San Diego and Julian of the mixed scenes of desolation and grandeur that will salute his eye before he reaches his journey's end."* Several columns later he continues:

"We shall not soon forget our sensations as we approached the Santa Isabel Valley. What a lovely spot it is, hollowed out of nature's hilly roughness with tender care? It is rarely the lot of mortals to drive down into a sweeter cluster of Nature's partialities in both soil and formation. The beautiful live oaks, which about this time began to appear in their mountain robustness and vigor, were scattered over this attractive plan. What a symmetrical tree the live oak is, when it gets a chance? From this time onward the live oak of San Diego County discounts in size and brightness of foliage the famed live oaks of Oakland. Over the bosom of the plain were scattered large herds of superb horses. We believe the Santa Isabel ranch belongs to Capt. Wilcox and is leased by Captain Johnson."

But little knows any inexperienced mortal what delights await him as he ascends the Santa Isabel grade. Tweed is a generous fellow to his horses and at every hill he made his poor bifurcated companion get out and walk. We submitted to the dispensation, and strode rapidly up the hill. About midway we stopped and turned to view the lovely Santa Isabel, little expecting such a panorama of beauty as spread out before us.

There lay the sweet and comely valley, with its gently undulations and exquisite hills. To the left the eye ran down a deep canon to a range of hills in the distance that, under the setting sun, were purple and mauve.

The raw heights glowed with the beauty of trees remarkable for their lordly size and illuminated foliage. But ah! In front and to the right, what a scene was spread out before us! Scarcely ever did mortal eye rest

*Scarcely ever did a
mortal eye rest
upon a more
delightful vision.*

upon a more delightful vision. We, in the seventy-five miles that separated us from San Diego, had gradually made an ascent of four thousand one hundred and fifty feet, and there before us lay the Bay of San Diego, and to the right the limitless expanse of the Pacific Ocean, bathed in a silver sheen. Three mountains broke the range straight ahead, but could plainly see the land go sheer down to the water's edge, and could see, away off; the glowing horizon swoop down to the glorified ocean's rim. The ascent was sufficient overcome the earth's curvature, and here we were looking upon a scene of beauty compared to which Morgan's lookout on the Pacific from the mountains about Panama was an insignificant and vulgar view. Church nor Bierstadt never painted such a spread of beauty, nor can they if they do not seek out San Diego and Julian. This was compensation, "heaped measure, flowing o'er" for the scriptural sameness in which "one hill was like unto another and one valley repeated another." Should we live a hundred years we shall never forget that bath to our optic nerves afforded by this glorious spread of Nature's beneficence.

Continued on page 4...



Before MSCP *(continued from page 3)*

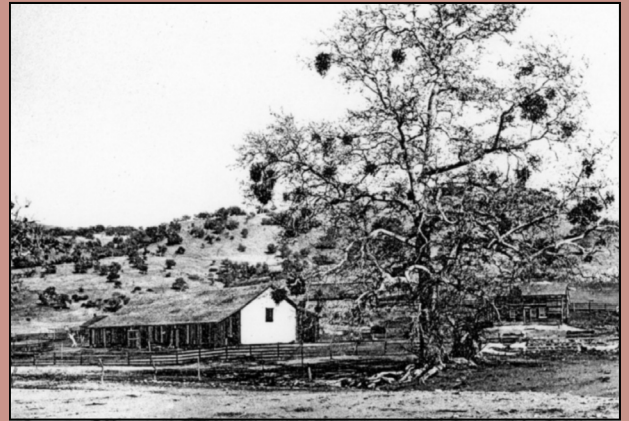
FIERCE FLAMES

SANTA YSABEL VISITED BY A DESTRUCTIVE FIRE — 10,000 ACRES OF FEED BURNED
SAN DIEGO UNION (CORRESPONDENCE OF THE UNION)

Nov. 6, 1887

Mesa Grande, Oct. 30, 1887

An extensive fire swept over the northern portion of the San Ysabel rancho yesterday, originating somewhere in the Mateway Cañon. It fairly flew before the east wind that was blowing at the time, running up the Mateway, the Carresita and Across the Mesa and Chiquita to the county road, there over the ridge toward the Mesa Grande, very seriously threatening the ranches of Mitchell, Cleveland, Gedney, Lewis and Rodriguez, which lie next to the Santa Ysabel rancho. The ranch owners had a large force of men in the field fighting the fire, but the average Swiss dairyman is too slow to conquer a fire that charges along at the rate of twelve miles an hour, and had it not been for the timely arrival of F.G. Cleveland and sons, who are old Californians, and understand the art, great damage would have been done by the flames. The people started back fires all along the county road, following up the line with wet sacks to extinguish them as soon as they and burned a sufficient space to prevent the big fire from spreading. It seemed at one time as though nothing could save the ranches of F. G. Cleveland and I. F. Lewis. Mr. Lewis was away from home, but the neighbors fought the fire as best they could, and the Clevelands worked all day and nearly all night to save their property. They succeeded in doing this, though they were scorched and blackened almost beyond recognition.



The original Santa Ysabel Ranch House burned in 1887.

The fire burned over some 10,000 acres, and will be a great loss to the ranch, as it was the main dependence for the late feed for cattle."

Highlighted Species: Red Diamond Rattlesnake

The spring season signals warmer weather, and with it the Red Diamond Rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber*) may be awakening from its winter hibernation. One of San Diego's largest snake species, this snake can grow over five feet in length. Its reddish color alternates with a lighter color on its back to make a diamond-like pattern. The red color from which it gets its name becomes more vibrant with age.

The most recognizable aspect of this rattler is its raccoon-striped tail which it will rattle when it feels threatened. Use caution if the



The Red Diamond Rattlesnake has been spotted among the rocks and brush at Sycamore Creek in the San Dieguito River Park.

Red Diamond Rattlesnake is seen in the wild because its bite is venomous. However, this snake is largely defensive and will not hunt large mammals. It feeds on small rodents, rabbits and birds.

Rattlesnakes do not lay eggs but instead give birth to live young. The female rattlesnakes only reproduce every two years. Although not endangered, this snake is a Federal and State of California Special Concern Species. It is found only in Southern California and Baja California.



In 2003, the State Water Resources Control Board awarded a Proposition 13 grant to the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) for the protection and restoration of a portion of Santa Maria Creek and adjacent ephemeral aquatic habitats (e.g., vernal pools, vernal swales, and alkali playas) in the Ramona Grasslands. In addition, the grant funded the acquisition of Cagney Ranch and baseline condition surveys of the project area which lead to the development of Area Specific Management Directives (AMC). Partners in the project included The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Conservation Biology Institute (CBI).

The approximately 8,000 acre proposed Ramona Grasslands Preserve is comprised of a number of properties that are conserved or publicly owned properties with conservation agreements pending, and properties targeted for conservation. Within the Preserve the

County acquired the 70-acre Hardy Ranch, and the 390-acre Cagney parcel (in coordination with TNC and with Proposition 13 grant funds). TNC has acquired 230 acres of the Oak Country Estates property, the 950-acre Davis-Eagle Ranch property, and has a Purchase Option Agreement on the 1,431-acre Gildred Property. The County is currently in negotiations with TNC to acquire a portion of Davis-Eagle Ranch and will purchase the remaining acreage in the near future. TNC is also willing to transfer the Oak Country Estates property in fee title to the County at no cost. In addition, the County received a voluntary conservation easement of 2.81 acres from an adjacent landowner along Santa Maria Creek.

Three years of baseline condition surveys was performed from 2003-2006 through the Santa Maria Creek Protection and Restoration project. A variety of field surveys and monitoring was implemented to characterize baseline conditions of the Preserve and to inform future management and monitoring efforts. Surveys were conducted in the grassland habitats of the Preserve to map habitat quality for Stephens' kangaroo rat; assess vegetable composition and structure; and gauge use of the Preserve by wintering and breeding raptors. Monitoring was conducted on vernal pools, vernal swales, and alkali playas in the Preserve to characterize hydrology and water characteristics, faunal communities, and composition of vegetation communities. Surveys were conducted in the Santa Maria Creek corridor to characterize water quality, channel geomorphology, vegetation, riparian birds, and arroyo toads.

Before the biological surveys were initiated, it was known that the Preserve would also require restoration activities to enhance the ecosystem of the grasslands. Five rounds of invasive plant species removal within the grasslands and along the Santa Maria Creek riparian corridor were performed. Managed cattle grazing continues within the Preserve to ensure that areas are not overgrazed. In addition, the Santa Maria Creek corridor was fenced to allow for the passive restoration of riparian habitat.

A Baseline Conditions Report was written for the project which includes the methodology and results of field surveys conducted in the project area. Area Specific Management Directives (ASMDs) were also written for the project. The ASMDs discuss guidelines for management and monitoring of the entire proposed Preserve covering all the vegetation types, wildlife, rare plants and habitats, sensitive wildlife species, and water quality monitoring. The ASMDs and Baseline Conditions Report were released for a 30-day public review including the Wildlife Agencies in early May 2007. The Preserve will be included in the North County Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) baseline preserve and the ASMDs may have to be amended upon plan approval to ensure conformance.

In addition, DPR is proposing passive recreation within the Preserve. The trail system will be a non-motorized, multi-use and will extend from Wellfield Park at the eastern end of Ramona, northwesterly to San Pasqual Valley which will link to the Coast to Crest Trail. The trail will also connect to the Cumming Ranch and Oak Country Estates residential development trail systems.

The ASMDs and Baseline Conditions Report for the Ramona Grasslands Preserve can be accessed on the DPR website, www.sdparks.org. Please contact Maeve Hanley, Group Program Manager at (858) 966-1371 if you have any questions.



OUTDOOR

Great American Backyard Campout

When some kids today say it's more fun to play a skateboard video game than to actually ride a skateboard, it may be because many kids just don't get outside enough. That's why the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) hosted the Great American Backyard Campout at 4S Ranch Community Park on June 23. Over 120 kids and their families participated in this year's event!

The campout is a "gateway" event that brings children, families, and neighbors into the park to generate interest in camping and the outdoors. There are two components to the event. As part of a nationwide Great American Backyard Campout, as well as part of DPR's "Movie in the Park" series, DPR showed the animated action-adventure comedy, *Open Season*. Along with enjoying the movie, participants had the opportunity to gaze at the stars, share campfire stories (without the campfire), and watch for wildlife. They were encouraged to go home and camp in their own back yards after the show, joining thousands of families across the nation in the campout.

The Department of Parks and Recreation also staged a free night of camping in the park for kids from 8-17 years old. This included sports, hiking, crafts, Dutch oven cooking, and vendors displaying outdoor related items and services.

The Great American Backyard Campout will take place each year on June 23rd. For more information on next year's Backyard Campout, check our "News & Events" link at www.sdparks.org.

ACTIVITIES

Earthfair

As the largest environmental fair in the world, San Diego's EarthFair attracts about 60,000 visitors each year. It takes place in Balboa Park every Earth Day. For its 18th anniversary, EarthFair was held on Sunday, April 22nd, 2007. More than 400 exhibitors were featured, presenting everyone with something exciting to fit their taste. The County's Department of Parks and Recreation participated and shared information about parks and preserves. On their display, they also made available the new MSCP species poster and pamphlets.

The day's events began with a "Children's Earth Parade and Cleaner Car Caravan and Show." The parade started at the Spanish Village and wound through the park to end at the Pan American Plaza. From making purses out of recycled fabric to solar-powered kiddie pools, all earth-friendly activities were there. The City and County of San Diego had their booths close together and were ready to provide all kinds of information about San Diego's biodiversity and conservation programs. EarthFair is a great way to help people become aware, involved, and active.

Right: MSCP materials were available on Earth Day.

Below: Visitors gather information on earth-friendly activities.



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 5201 Ruffin Road, San Diego, CA 92123
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